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Subject: Morning Consult Washington: Week in Review & What's Ahead

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WASHINGTON

By Eli Yokley

Week in Review

Impeachment inquiry

- Two White House Office of Management and Budget staffers left the agency after expressing concerns about the Trump administration's hold on U.S. security assistance to Ukraine, according to the transcript of career OMB staffer Mark Sandy's Nov. 16 closed-door testimony to House impeachment investigators. The statements from Sandy, the first OMB official to testify in the impeachment probe, mark the first time that someone has said that a budget office employee left the Trump administration over frustrations about the release of the aid.
- President Donald Trump had already been made aware of the intelligence community whistleblower's complaint about his dealings with Ukraine when he released U.S. military assistance to the country in September, according to two people familiar with the matter. The sources said White House counsel's office lawyers told Trump about the complaint in late August, which sheds new light on the president's decision in early September to release the aid and his denial to Gordon Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, that there was a "quid pro quo" with Ukraine.
- In an interview, Trump denied directing his lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, to go to Ukraine to investigate his political rivals, although the former New York City mayor has publicly stated that he conducted an investigation "concerning 2016 Ukrainian collusion and

corruption" on behalf of the president. In an email provided by Giuliani's lawyer, Giuliani said that Trump is correct and that he never "went to Ukraine for any probe."

Investigations

- Federal prosecutors in recent weeks have sent subpoenas and other requests seeking information related to Giuliani and two of his associates, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, according to sources familiar with the matter. The reported subpoenas could signal a federal investigation into possible money laundering, obstruction of justice and campaign finance violations, and suggest the prosecutors are looking at Giuliani himself.
- A federal judge in Washington ruled that close presidential advisers can be compelled to testify before Congress, striking a blow against a legal doctrine known as absolute immunity that has been asserted for decades by presidential lawyers. The decision, which the Justice Department said it would appeal and seek to put on hold, comes as part of a House lawsuit brought to enforce a subpoena against former White House counsel Don McGahn.
- The House Oversight Committee is suing Attorney General Bill Barr and Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross for their refusal to comply with subpoenas for records related to Trump's efforts to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census. The White House had argued that its aides were "absolutely immune" from congressional subpoenas, but a federal judge undercut that defense in the McGahn case.
- The Supreme Court temporarily blocked a lower court ruling that had granted the House immediate access to Trump's financial records from the accounting firm Mazars USA.

The Trump administration

- Trump made a surprise trip to visit troops in Afghanistan on Thanksgiving day. It was his second visit to a combat zone and his first trip to Afghanistan.
- Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer resigned upon request from Defense Secretary Mark Esper amid a dispute with Trump over the president's decision to intervene in favor of a Navy SEAL accused of war crimes. Trump announced he would nominate Kenneth Braithwaite, the U.S. ambassador to Norway, to replace Spencer.

- Esper said Trump gave him a direct order to allow a Navy SEAL accused of war crimes to retire with his Trident Pin, despite resistance from Navy leaders. Esper also accused Spencer of making a secret offer to the White House to rig the Navy disciplinary process to ensure that the Navy SEAL, Edward Gallagher, did not lose his SEAL status.
- The U.S. military and Syrian Kurdish forces resumed operations against the Islamic State in northern Syria, nearly two months after Trump's order to withdraw American forces from the region, according to military officials.
- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters the debunked theory that Ukraine, not Russia, meddled in the 2016 presidential election is worth investigating. Fiona Hill, a former White House official, has said the notion that Ukraine hacked the Democratic National Committee and framed Russia is "being perpetrated and propagated by the Russian security services."
- Turkey began testing an air defense system acquired from Russia, according to a Turkish official, in a move that could add to tensions with Washington and trigger new U.S. sanctions. Pentagon officials have also warned that Turkey will not be able to continue building components for Lockheed Martin Corp.'s F-35 fighter jet if it continues with its deployment of the Russian system, citing security concerns.
- Trump said he will designate Mexican drug cartels as terrorist groups for trafficking narcotics and people. Mexico's foreign ministry said it was seeking a high-level meeting with U.S. officials to address the legal designation.
- Trump signed the bipartisan Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act into law.

2020

- Michael Bloomberg, the billionaire former New York City mayor, launched a bid for the Democratic presidential nomination after weeks of speculation. Bloomberg, who does not plan to compete in the first four nominating contests in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina, has vowed to spend at least \$150 million on a campaign and has already begun a \$30 million television advertising campaign.

- After a steady late summer rise, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) is losing ground with the Democratic electorate, according to the latest Morning Consult poll. Fifteen percent of Democratic primary voters prefer her as their first choice, down 2 percentage points from the previous week and marking her worst showing in the national polling since late August.

What's Ahead

- The House and Senate are in session this week.
- Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp (R) is reportedly set to tap financial executive Kelly Loeffler for the seat to be vacated by Sen. Johnny Isakson (R). Trump and Republicans had pressed him to appoint GOP Rep. Doug Collins.
- House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) told fellow lawmakers his panel's report on whether Trump committed an impeachable offense in withholding U.S. military assistance from Ukraine as he pushed for investigations into a political rival could come as soon as this week after lawmakers return from Thanksgiving break.
- The House Judiciary Committee announced it will hold an impeachment hearing on Wednesday, beginning a new phase of the inquiry. The hearing will focus on the "constitutional grounds for presidential impeachment," and the panel said it would invite lawyers for the White House to participate.
- Trump is set to visit London on Tuesday and Wednesday for the summit of NATO leaders, marking the organization's 70th anniversary.
- Trump's lawyers have until Thursday to formally seek a Supreme Court hearing on the Mazars USA case.

Events Calendar (All Times Local)

12/02/2019

CSIS hosts event on Russian defense spending 9:30 am

CSIS hosts event previewing the NATO summit 10:00 am

12/04/2019

Politico hosts event on the environment and 2020 7:00 am

House Judiciary Committee holds hearing on impeachment 10:00 am

Heritage Foundation hosts event on impeachment inquiry 12:00 pm

12/05/2019

Rep. Scott participates in Axios event 8:00 am

House Armed Services Committee chairman participates in AEI event on civil-military relations 8:30 am

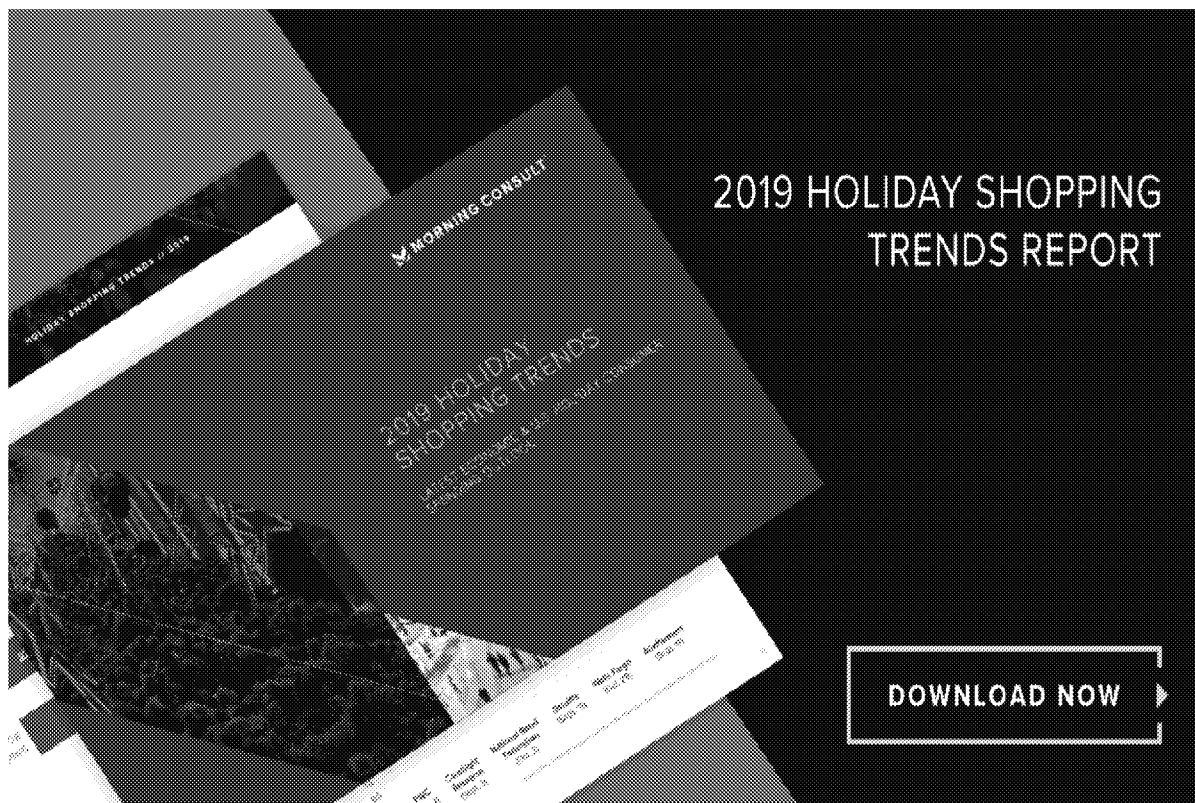
CSIS hosts event on U.S.-Russia relations 5:00 pm

Speaker Pelosi to participate in CNN town hall 9:00 pm

12/06/2019

Brookings hosts event on free markets 2:30 pm

[View full calendar](#)



New Report: 2019 Holiday Shopping Trends

Our latest economic and U.S. holiday shopping report shows consumers are more optimistic heading into the holiday shopping season than they were in September. [Download our newest data](#) to learn how consumer confidence continues its upward trajectory since bottoming out in mid-August.

Morning Consult Washington Top Reads

1) [Navy secretary forced out by Pentagon chief over handling of Navy SEAL's war crimes case](#)

Ashley Parker and Dan Lamothe, The Washington Post

2) [Esper says Trump ordered him to stop SEAL review board](#)

Robert Burns, The Associated Press

3) [Warren's September Surge Has Evaporated](#)

Eli Yokley, Morning Consult

4) [Bumbling Congress gives Trump the budget freeze he wanted](#)

Sarah Ferris and Burgess Everett, Politico

5) [Plenty Of People Are Persuadable On Impeachment](#)

Amelia Thomson-DeVeaux and Laura Bronner, FiveThirtyEight

6) [U.S. Resumes Large-Scale Operations Against ISIS in Northern Syria](#)

Eric Schmitt, The New York Times

7) [Trump Privately Frets 'What's Going on With Drudge?' During Impeachment, Asks Jared Kushner to 'Look Into It'](#)

Asawin Suebsaeng, The Daily Beast

8) [Pompeo says Trump's debunked Ukraine conspiracy theory is worth looking into](#)

John Hudson, The Washington Post

9) [Gov. Matt Bevin pardons man serving life sentence for sex abuse of 6-year-old stepdaughter](#)

Joe Sonka, Louisville Courier Journal

10) [Federal Subpoenas Seek Information on Giuliani's Consulting Business](#)

Rebecca Davis et al., The Wall Street Journal



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